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Subject: Bee Kill Incident Report (Contains Personally Identifiable Information; PII)
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Attachments: [Beekill. \[REDACTED\] California 03_31_17\).docx](#)

CONFIDENTIAL: Contains PII

Attached is a bee kill incident report from a commercial beekeeper in California.

On Friday, March 31, 2017, a commercial beekeeper [REDACTED] reported that of the 3,200 colonies that he brought to support almond pollinations, he had 400 colonies placed in three almond orchards in Stanislaus County, California. On March 15, all colonies (180) in one orchard and 48 colonies in a second orchard exhibited elevated brood loss (pupae failing to eclose; proboscis extended; wingless; large numbers of dead brood on the bottom board or discarded by workers at the entrance to the colony). Colonies appeared to be unaffected in the third orchard. Although the colonies remained queen right, brood patterns were spotty and according to the beekeeper at least one full brood cycle was lost. The beekeeper had treated for varroa mite in the fall using Apivar® (amitraz) and mite loads were less than 1/100 bees based on sugar roll method. The beekeeper was uncertain about Nosema spore levels in his colonies; however, colonies were at roughly an 8-frame average on entering the orchards on February 10, 2017. The beekeepers speculated that the loss may be due to the use of insect growth regulators (IGRs) based on what he described as anecdotal information. The colonies have subsequently been relocated to Santa Cruz County and are currently in apple orchards.

The incident was reported to the County Ag Commissioner Office and was investigated the same day; samples of dead brood were collected. According to the beekeeper, the Commissioner's office reported that their preliminary review of the intended pesticide use reports did not reveal that any bee toxic chemicals had been applied in the vicinity of the affected colonies; therefore, the dead bee samples would not be submitted for pesticide residue analyses. The beekeeper expressed frustration that the County would not analyze the samples and noted that this underscored why beekeepers are reluctant to report incidents. He requested that the Commissioner's office return the samples they had collected [but did not analyze]. The beekeeper believed that his grower would not use any pesticide that would be detrimental to his bees while the bees were providing pollination services. He noted that other beekeepers were similarly affected. In total, this beekeeper maintains between 5,000 – 6,500 colonies that move between California and North Dakota.